

## REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-16 remain in this application.

The Examiner rejects claim 1 under 35 USC 102(a) as being anticipated by Beall ('266). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection because the elements of claim 1 are not all found in Beall reference. The present invention as recited in claim 1 requires a particulate sealant for forming plugs in selected cells of honeycomb structures. Beall discloses extrudable mixtures for forming cordierite-containing structures, the sealant material being composed of a ceramic blend which forms cordierite, and a binder system including a thermoplastic polymer capable of forming a reversible gel or a thermosetting resin.. Beall does not disclose a particulate sealing material for forming plugs in honeycombs. Therefore, claim 1 is not anticipated by Beall. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 USC 102(a) be withdrawn.

The Examiner rejects claims 1-3, and 10-12 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishimura ('393) in view of Hamanaka ('992), and claims 4-9, and 14-16 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishimura ('393) in view of Hamanaka ('992), and further in view of Johnson ('197). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the following reasons. The present invention as recited in independent claim 1 requires a particulate sealant for forming plugs in selected cells of honeycomb structures, the sealant material being composed of a ceramic blend which forms cordierite, and a binder system including a thermoplastic polymer capable of forming a reversible gel or a thermosetting resin. Nishimura discloses a method of sealing honeycomb cells by using a material which undergoes a volume expansion (col. 5, lines 1-22).

The Examiner states that the composition of the Nishimura sealing material includes inorganic compound and binder, as described in col. 4, lines 29-32. Applicants respectfully disagree with this statement. Specifically, in col. 4, lines 29-32 Nishimura discloses that the material for the *honeycomb structure* can be cordierite, mullite, alumina, silicon carbide and the like. The sealing material of Nishimura is described in col. 5, lines 1-22, as being a material which expands upon foaming, such as a low boiling point saturated hydrocarbon, such as propane, butane or pentane, or an organic foaming agent such as halogenated hydrocarbon, e.g., methyl chloride or chlorodifluoroethane, impregnated in a resin such as polystyrene, polyethylene, polypropylene, polyurethane or acrylonitrile, or a highly water-adsorptive resin, or an expandable rubber or high molecular weight polymer which expands upon gelation. Therefore, the sealant material of Nishimura does not have an inorganic ceramic blend component as is required by the present invention.

Neither Hamanaka nor Johnson disclose a sealing material for plugging honeycomb cells. As discussed primary reference Nishimura does not teach or even suggest the basic structure of the applicants' claimed invention, and since the secondary references Hamanaka and Johnson do not cure this deficiency, the resulting combination also fails to disclose or suggest the present invention. Therefore, applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner has not established a prima facie case of obviousness. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 USC 103(a) be withdrawn.

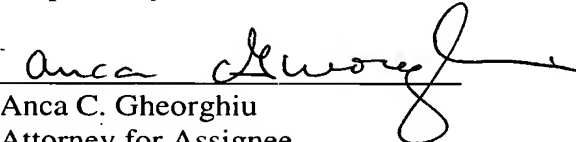
Appl. No.: 10/087,043  
Amdt. Dated: 2/18/04  
Reply to Office Action of: 11/18/2003

Based upon the above amendments, remarks, and papers of records, applicant believes the pending claims of the above-captioned application are in allowable form and patentable over the prior art of record. Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Applicant believes that no extension of time is necessary to make this Reply timely. Should applicant be in error, applicant respectfully requests that the Office grant such time extension pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) as necessary to make this Reply timely, and hereby authorizes the Office to charge any necessary fee or surcharge with respect to said time extension to the deposit account of the undersigned firm of attorneys, Deposit Account 03-3325.

Please direct any questions or comments to Anca C. Gheorghiu at (607) 974-3322.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anca Gheorghiu", is written over a horizontal line.

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